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ABSTRACT

This paper chronicles the life of George Peabody, intermingled with anecdotes on how the researchers gathered data in their studies. A brief overview of Peabody's life introduces the paper with a personal narrative of how the authors' search for details on his life began. Both researchers had affiliations with educational institutions resulting from the Peabody endowments. From this personal experience came the research on Peabody's life and philanthropy, using papers and materials written about the man and visits to places of significance in his life. (EH)

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On the Trail of Educational Philanthropist George Peabody (1795-1869): A Dialogue*

by
Betty J. and Franklin Parker

This paper, "On the Trail of George Peabody," tells how and why we read original papers by and about George Peabody in library-depositories in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, New York, New England, and London, England. We intermingle his (George Peabody's) story with our pursuit of "On the trail of George Peabody." What was the search like? What did it mean to us? First, a brief sketch of George Peabody.

He was born in 1795 into a poor South Danvers, Mass., family, had four years in a district school, was apprenticed four years in a general store, and worked in his brother's clothing store in Newburyport, Mass. In 1812 at age 17 he went south to Georgetown, D.C., for economic opportunity. He became a successful importer from Europe and wholesaler in the U.S.A. of clothing and other merchandise. He made five buying trips to Europe, 1827 to 1837. In 1837 the Maryland legislature commissioned him to sell in London to European investors Maryland's $8 million bonds to finance internal improvements (the Baltimore and Ohio Canal and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad). He stayed in London the rest of his life, 32 years, as broker-banker. He marketed American state securities abroad when we needed foreign capital for internal improvements, helped finance the Mexican War loan, bought European iron and later steel rails for U. S. western railroads, and financed the Atlantic Cable Co. Needing a partner, he selected J.P. Morgan's father (J.S. Morgan), from Boston, and made young J.P. Morgan his firm's New York agent. George Peabody was thus the root of the international J.P. Morgan banking firm.

More important than how he made his money was the way he used it. Before he died at age 74 (November 4, 1869), Peabody, a bachelor, was the best known philanthropist in the English speaking world. Frank's dissertation documents his being the founder of American educational philanthropy. More George Peabody details later. First, what brought us together? What put us on the trail of George Peabody?

We attended Berea College, 40 miles south of Lexington, Ky., first met there, and were engaged in 1949. Frank went to graduate school at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. A year later, after Betty received her Berea B.A. degree, June 1950, we were married. The Berea College Alumni Office helped get our first teaching jobs at Ferrum Jr. College, a Methodist work-study school near Roanoke, Va. To improve our teaching skills and qualifications, we went to George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn. We were there the summers of 1951 and 1952, and continually from fall 1952 through August 1956, just over 4 years. Berea led to Ferrum led to Peabody. Now, about Peabody College and why we took on the George Peabody research topic.

Among Nashville's many colleges and universities are Vanderbilt, Peabody College, and Scarritt (Scarritt has since become an adult education center). They adjoin each other and are served by a large common university library. A $600 scholarship encouraged us to leave our teaching jobs at Ferrum College, Va., for graduate study at Peabody College. We hoped to find part-time jobs in Nashville. Now, about finding our apartment in Nashville.

Betty applied for a teaching job at Jackson Business College. Back came a reply from President David E. Short, Jr., saying: If you will teach Business English, I'll give you a rent-free apartment. Wonderful! We both worked part-time and took Peabody courses. The Peabody College professor so crucial in our lives was Clifton L. Hall, professor of history and philosophy ofeducation, Canadian (Quebec)-born, with a University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) doctorate.

*Given April 19, 1996, Community House, Uplands, PO Box 100, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578.

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Frank took classes under Dr. Hall, a fine scholar, a martinet but fair, immensely respected, especially at Vanderbilt, where he also conducted the French language exam then required for doctoral candidates. Would he be Frank's doctoral major professor? What dissertation topic should Frank pursue? For months he looked into the history of higher education in Tennessee as a topic. He conferred with Dean of Instruction Felix C. Robb, later president of George Peabody College for Teachers. Robb told Frank that at Harvard University, where he (Robb) earned his doctorate, historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., had urged him to write about George Peabody's vast educational philanthropy. It was true, we soon learned, that George Peabody was a neglected hero in American business and in American educational philanthropy. Felix Robb chose instead to do a dissertation on educational administration. Perhaps regretting a good topic not pursued, he suggested it to Frank.

To know why Robb suggested the George Peabody topic to Frank, we must emphasize Clifton Hall's high esteem among Nashville academics. His backing was crucial. Felix Robb, Clifton Hall, and others on Frank's doctoral committee were looking for a student willing to do research in U.S. and British depositories that might be costly in time and money. We were not long married, had no children, were looking for a challenge. What was there to lose? We had each other. We first went to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Looking for an inexpensive room in Washington took us to poor working-class black and ethnic sections. The seedy decay was in sharp contrast to the city's clean and striking monuments.

The Library of Congress was to us a marble delight. We worked like ants in that great domed reading room, searched the card catalogue, sent for hundreds of books, read manuscripts, wandered the corridors, looked for staff eating places, knowing they would be cheaper.

These six names illustrate the people whose papers we read at the Library of Congress:

- William Wilson Corcoran, business associate with whom George Peabody helped financed the Mexican War loan. Corcoran is remembered for donating the Corcoran Art Gallery to Washington, D.C.
- Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State, involved in George Peabody's funeral and a trustee of the Peabody Education Fund.
- John W. Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, George Peabody's friend, who brought together George Peabody and Johns Hopkins, leading to the founding of Johns Hopkins University and Medical School.
- President Andrew Johnson, who called on George Peabody at the Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C., 1867, wanting George Peabody to be his Secretary of the Treasury.
- Benjamin Moran, London Embassy secretary, who kept a diary in which he often wrote critically of George Peabody.
- Riggs Family. Older Elisha Riggs took 19-year old George Peabody as partner in Riggs, Peabody and Co., in Georgetown, D.C.; then in Baltimore. Riggs's nephews joined the firm when it became Peabody, Riggs and Co. The well known Riggs National Bank of Washington, D.C., was started by that family.

From the Library of Congress we went to the National Archives to read "Veterans Records of the War of 1812," recording George Peabody's days as a soldier, drilling with Francis Scott Key, of "Star-Spangled Banner" fame. We read "Admirals and Commodores' Letters," "Dispatches from United States Ministers, Great Britain," and "Log of U.S.S. *Plymouth*," all three about George Peabody's unusual transatlantic funeral.

Then on to Baltimore, which was special. Peabody worked there 22 years (1815 to 1837), grew to maturity there (ages 20 to 42), rose from junior to senior partner of Peabody, Riggs and Co. The Maryland legislature and governor had sent him to London to sell its bond issue for

internal improvements. This task had turned him from merchant to broker-banker to international banker and put him on the road to riches.

To Baltimore friends who became his trustees he gave $1.4 million for a four-part Peabody Institute of Baltimore: 1-lecture hall and lecture fund; 2-art gallery, whose paintings are still held by various Baltimore art museums; 3-a special reference library, which for some years rivaled in some fields the great Library of Congress; and 4-the Peabody Conservatory Music, still an important music school.

The Peabody Library of Baltimore and the Peabody Conservatory of Music both thrive today as units of Johns Hopkins University, with which they have long had academic connections. In fact, 24 hours after Baltimore Quaker merchant Johns Hopkins asked for a conference with George Peabody, then on a U.S. visit in 1867, Hopkins recorded his will leaving $8 million to establish the Johns Hopkins University and Medical School.

When we went to Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University housing office sent us to Mr. and Mrs. Ruckdaschel's home for a room. What to do with our old car during the four months' research in London? The Ruckdaschels called their neighbor, who rented us his garage cheaply. These were a few of the many good people who helped us on the trail of George Peabody.

In New York at the Pierpont Morgan Library we read the papers of J.S. Morgan and his son J.P. Morgan. In later richer times, the Morgans far exceeded George Peabody's financial dealings. Yet George Peabody & Co. was their founding root. Now, about our going to London.

When we were undecided about going to England, we attended a meeting of Nashville's Berea Alumni Group. Its leader was a sweet, dear older man who encouraged us. He suddenly died. His death sharply pointed up life's uncertainty at that moment of decision in our young married lives.

Encouraged by another $600 grant, we gave up our part-time jobs to do the London research. Our problem: how to get there at low cost? We turned to Ben Welsh, under whom Betty had worked in the Berea College Labor Office. He was a part-time travel agent helping Berea people save money. He wrote us: I've booked you on the ocean liner, the *United States*, round trip, tiny stateroom, no window, down near the engine, but inexpensive. We went. Betty was seasick. I found and read Albert Schweitzer's *Search for the Historical Jesus*. Who got off the ship on the return voyage? The Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Royalty, no less!

The British Museum Manuscript Division had Prime Minister William E. Gladstone's papers. Gladstone's cabinet made the decision to use Britain's newest and largest warship, named H.M.S. *Monarch*, to return George Peabody's remains in 1869-70 from England to the U.S.A.

George Peabody, who lived in London,1837-69, gave London $2.5 million for low-cost apartments for the working poor. This 1862 gift warmed English hearts and brought George Peabody many honors. The Guildhall Record Office has the "Journals of the Court of Common Council," describing the Freedom of the City of London given to George Peabody, July 10, 1862. The "Minutes of the Committee for Erecting a Statue to Mr. George Peabody, 1866-1870" list contributors to George Peabody's seated statue in Threadneedle Street, near the Royal Exchange. A replica is in front of the Peabody Institute of Baltimore.

"Alien Entry Lists" in the Public Record Office recorded every time George Peabody entered a British port. There we also read "Foreign Affairs Papers" and "Admiralty Papers," which documented Britain's part in returning George Peabody's remains for burial in Harmony Grove Cemetery near Salem, Mass.

In Westminster Abbey we read "Recollections by Dean [Arthur P.] Stanley of Funerals in Westminster Abbey 1865-1881." This dean of Westminster Abbey was as astonished as the British

public that this American banker in London gave a city and country not his own $2.5 million for workers' low-cost housing. Dean Stanley offered Westminster Abbey for George Peabody's funeral, a rare honor. The Abbey also has a "Funeral Fee Book 1811-1899," which lists funeral costs for George Peabody's remains to lie in state for 30 days in the Abbey near Britain's unknown soldier.

We visited Fishmongers Hall, where George Peabody was made an honorary member, April 19, 1866. Frank was invited to Windsor Castle Royal Archives to read a dozen letters by Queen Victoria and her advisors to, from, and about George Peabody.

We went to Morgan, Grenfell & Co., 23 Great Winchester Street, where we read George Peabody papers. On the front door are three brass signs. The bottom one, worn from polishing, reads: George Peabody & Co., 1843-64. On retirement, Peabody, a bachelor without issue, withdrew his name from the firm he knew he could not control after death. The sign above is J.S. Morgan & Co., 1864-90. On top is Morgan, Grenfell & Co., since 1890.

We went to the General Register Office, Somerset House, to get a copy of his death certificate, dated November 4, 1869. Then, on to read British newspapers of the 1840s-60s.

Bound original British newspapers were then kept at Colindale, a long ride by tube from London. Indexed *New York Times* and London *Times* gave us specific dates in his career to look for. We turned page after page of unindexed newspapers. Some days we found nothing; other days we found a bonanza of articles.

Frank wrote letters to British newspapers asking for George Peabody letters or memorabilia. Replies told of glassware embossed with George Peabody's name sold by an enterprising manufacturer as a souvenir when George Peabody died in London, 1869. Large and small plates, large and small cups, all glass, all embossed "George Peabody." Two families invited us to their homes, gave us George Peabody glassware, which we gave to U.S. Peabody institutions. Our friendship with these donors lasts to this day.

George Peabody was blackballed when first proposed for membership in exclusive London clubs. After his $2.5 million gift for London housing, the prestigious Athenaeum Club made him a member. Librarian Eileen Stiff showed us Athenaeum Club records. She also took us home for a cup of sturdy tea. We bonded instantly with Eileen Stiff and her American-born friend, novelist Margaret Goldsmith. They took us to visit their friend Christy Payne, who lived in a Peabody flat, where some 26,000 people still live. Our friendship with Eileen, Margaret, and Christy lasted until their deaths.

Where did we live in London? What did we eat on a tight budget? We found a student bed sitting room through the University of London. It was warmed by a gas heater, into which you had to put shillings to keep it going. Milk delivered daily we kept outside the window. Peanut butter, bread, and milk for breakfast. A 35¢ lunch in a pub lasted until a nighttime snack of fruit, milk, and bread. We loved the London research that fall of 1954, planning where to go, what to read, what to copy.

In 1870, most George Peabody papers were brought from London by a nephew and stored at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. George Peabody had earlier paid for the schooling of several nephews at Phillips Academy. In 1866 George Peabody gave Phillips Academy $25,000 for a professorship in math and natural science. In the early 1930s, these George Peabody papers were sorted by date and subject into 140 boxes, 250 account and ledger books, newspaper albums and memorabilia. They were transferred from Phillips Academy to the Essex Institute, Salem. Next to the Essex Institute was the East India Marine Society's ethnological collection, gathered by Yankee clipper ship masters from around the world. George Peabody's gift of $140,000 in 1867 provided the building which combined the East India Marine Society's ethnological collection with

Essex County historical documents. That building, now the Peabody Essex Museum, is in Salem, famous for the Salem witch trials, and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables*.

Opening, reading, sorting, and copying dusty letters was fun. Especially helpful was Ruth Henderson Hill of the Essex Institute print department. She was also president of the Peabody Historical Society and had herself written about George Peabody. We were helped by librarian Nate Masterson of the first Peabody Institute Library in George Peabody's hometown, where his many honors are on display. We rented a room in the Salem home of the Kenneallys, an Irish family. Mother Kenneally put up with our "washing." Explanation: we had bought an early portable copier that required wet chemicals. Frank was forever hanging wet papers on Mother Kenneally's clothesline.

We also read George Peabody papers at Harvard and Yale Universities. Harvard has a Peabody Museum of Anthropology. Yale has a Peabody Museum of Natural History. George Peabody founded these two science museums in 1866 with a gift of $150,000 each. The reason for these gifts goes back to George Peabody's paying for the education of his younger brothers and sisters, and then for their children's schooling. He paid for one nephew, O.C. Marsh, through Phillips Academy, Yale College, Yale's graduate Sheffield School of Science, a science doctorate at German universities, and the purchase of a mineral rock collection. O.C. Marsh became a Yale paleontologist, the first in the U.S.A., second in the world, and a discoverer of dinosaur remains. O.C. Marsh influenced his uncle George Peabody to establish the three museums of science at Harvard, Yale, and in Salem.

Peabody had vowed to give an educational gift to every U.S. city where he had lived. He endowed seven Peabody Institute libraries: 1-Danvers, Mass., 2-North Danvers, Mass., when his hometown was divided north and south; 3-Georgetown, Mass., his mother's hometown; 4-Newburyport, Mass., where he worked in his older brother's shop; 5-Georgetown, D.C., where he opened a store and peddled goods from door to door; 6-Thetford, VT, where as a boy he visited his maternal grandparents; and 7-Baltimore. These seven institute libraries comprised a building, free library, and lecture hall and fund--offering adult education popular at the time, like Cooper Union in New York City, like other lyceums and chautauquas. His London housing gift for working people came about because authorities told him that housing was the London poor's greatest need.

Christmas 1954, back in Nashville, with boxes of notes. Back to Peabody College, where Frank got a part-time job. Betty became secretary to Peabody Professor Susan B. Riley, who was that year the national president of the American Association of University Women. Back to President Short of Jackson Business College. May we live with you again? Yes. What rent? Pay whatever you can afford. Mr. Short was big and generous to us.

Nights, weekends, and holidays, Frank mostly, and Betty when he needed help, sorted out the George Peabody story from mountains of notes. Then came a letter from President Henry H. Hill of George Peabody College for Teachers: Will you give the Founders Day Address, February 18, 1955? Here was a pressure point Like getting hanged, it focused our attention, mightily. Frank wrote, Betty typed, maybe 50 drafts, who knows? No computers then. Scissors and scotch tape. Draft after draft. Revise and retype. Hone and polish. How to put the whole George Peabody story in one sparkling half-hour speech?

We told the George Peabody story with a focus on the Peabody Education Fund. Background: George Peabody in London was distressed by the Civil War. He had friends North and South. He helped President Lincoln's emissaries to London to urge Britain's neutrality. Former South Carolina Governor William Aiken wrote George Peabody: the South is ruined. Nothing can save it. "Its destruction is...certain." An old and sick George Peabody braved a transatlantic crossing to dedicate the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, October 1866. To trustees still divided over the Civil War, George Peabody asked: "May not this Institute be a common

ground where all may meet, burying former differences and animosities? May not Baltimore, the birthplace of religious toleration, become the star of political toleration and charity?"

It was on that U.S. visit that George Peabody brought together a remarkable group of trustees at the Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C. He read to them his February 7, 1867, letter founding the $2 million Peabody Education Fund for the Southern States. Years later, President Bruce R. Payne of George Peabody College for Teachers described that meeting imaginatively:

> There stand several governors of states both North and South; senators of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant and Admiral Farragut. [Chief trustee Robert C.] Winthrop is called to take the chair. Mr. Peabody rises to read his deed of gift. They kneel in a circle of prayer, the Puritan of New England, the pioneer of the West, the financier of the metropolis, and the defeated veteran of the Confederacy. [On] bended knee they dedicate this great gift. They consecrate themselves to its wise expenditure. In that act, not quite two years after Appomattox, is the first guarantee of a reunited country.

From 1867 to 1914, 47 years, the Peabody Education Fund promoted public schools, teachers' institutes, and teacher training normal schools in the 11 former Confederate states, plus West Virginia, added because of its poverty. Peabody Education Fund trustees over the years included three U.S. presidents: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Grover Cleveland, two U.S. Supreme Court justices, several state court justices, two bishops, several U.S. Congress members, U.S. cabinet members, two state governors, and three financiers: J.P. Morgan, Anthony Drexel, inspired to found Drexel University, and Paul Tulane, inspired to found Tulane University.

The Peabody Education Fund trustees wanted to endow one teachers college as a model for the South. They decided on the University of Nashville, which began as Davidson Academy, 1785-1806, rechartered as Cumberland College, 1806-26, rechartered as the University of Nashville, 1826-75. The Peabody Education Fund trustees remade the University of Nashville into the Peabody Normal College, 1875-1909; renamed George Peabody College for Teachers, 1909-79, renamed Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, since 1979. Its lineage makes Peabody College the 17th college founded in the U.S.A.

George Peabody's instructions allowed the Peabody Education Fund trustees to dissolve the trust after 30 years. In 1914, they gave $1.5 million to George Peabody College for Teachers, with considerable amounts for teacher education in 14 southern state universities, such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, whose education building is still called Peabody Hall. Some Peabody Education Fund money is still used for African American education in the South.

Frank's Founders' Day speech was published in an attractive illustrated pamphlet. Frank finished his dissertation, defended it, and graduated August 1956. Off we went to teaching jobs. On salary, at last. (No more peanut butter sandwiches!) We were at the University of Texas in Austin seven years, University of Oklahoma at Norman four years, and West Virginia University, Morgantown 18 years.

For its May 1970 commencement, Peabody College officials brought to Nashville prominent Peabody family members, including former Massachusetts Governor Endicott Peabody's family. Frank also spoke at that commencement. Noting his presence from a Nashville *Tennessean* article, the Vanderbilt University Press director asked to publish his revised George Peabody dissertation. The resulting book, *George Peabody, A Biography*, appeared in 1971.

Frank retired in 1986 but did post-retirement teaching at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, three years; and Western Carolina University, near Asheville, NC, five years. Betty's parents have lived near us since 1977. Betty's father died December 1993. We and Betty's mother came to Uplands May 5, 1994. For the bicentennial of George Peabody's birth last year (February 18, 1995), the Vanderbilt University Press director asked us to revise and update *George Peabody, A Biography*. When the 1995 revision appeared, we gave talks to Peabody bicentennial audiences

in Salem, Danvers, and Peabody, Mass. Frank's 22 previously published articles on George Peabody were reprinted in "The Legacy of George Peabody: Special Bicentenary Issue," *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Fall 1994), 210 pages.

We must briefly sketch George Peabody's unusual 96-day transatlantic funeral. In his last U.S.A. visit, a sick George Peabody, hardly able to walk, joined business friend W.W. Corcoran at White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., a popular warm springs health spa, in August 1869. There he met and was warmly received by Robert E. Lee, then president of Washington College, now Washington and Lee University in Virginia. Peabody gave Lee's college $60,000 for science. With Lee were eight other Confederate generals and northern and southern educators. Their talk that August 1869 on public education needs of the South influenced later conferences and encouraged large foundation grants that significantly improved public schools in the South.

Peabody left Robert E. Lee for Salem, Mass., where he made funeral plans. In New York he made his last will. He arrived in London gravely ill. Queen Victoria invited Peabody to recuperate at Windsor Castle. But it was too late. Her advisor, Sir Arthur Helps told her, "There are many persons who wish to pay public respect to the memory of that good man."

George Peabody died November 4, 1869, at 80 Eaton Square, home of business associate Sir Curtis Lampson. Knowing that George Peabody's will required burial in Massachusetts, Lampson telegraphed a nephew, who left for England to take the body home. There would be at least a two weeks' delay. Meanwhile, letters poured in to London newspapers wanting public honors for Peabody.

Confusion about Peabody funeral plans greatly concerned U.S. London Embassy Secretary Benjamin Moran. His diary entries reflected embassy consternation. One entry in his diary: "Peabody haunts the Legation from all parts of the world like a ghost." Another entry: "Old Peabody has given us much trouble." A third diary entry: "Will that old man ever be buried?" But Benjamin Moran, who attended the previously mentioned Westminster Abbey service for George Peabody, was wondrously touched and recorded in his diary:

> I reflected on the marvelous career of the man, his early life, his penurious habits, his vast fortune, his magnificent charity; and the honor then being paid to his memory by the Queen of England in the place of sepulchre of twenty English kings. An anthem was sung and the service end[ed]--George Peabody having received burial in Westminster Abbey, an honor coveted by nobles and not always granted kings.

When George Peabody died, British-American relations were tense over the *Alabama* claims. The *Alabama*, a British-built warship sold to the Confederacy, had high-jacked or sunk 64 Union ships. The U.S. demanded and ultimately received $15.5 million from Britain in reparations. Meanwhile, angry threats of war came from both sides.

To ease this tension, and as a mark of respect, Prime Minister Gladstone's cabinet on November 10, 1869, approved the transfer of Peabody's remains to America aboard the *Monarch*, Britain's newest, largest warship. In a public address that night Gladstone said, "With the country of Mr. Peabody we [will] not quarrel."

The coffin was taken from Westminster Abbey to Portsmouth. In pouring rain and a blowing storm, marines formed an honor guard. Scarlet-robed Portsmouth council members under black umbrellas mingled oddly with lines, spars, and beams of assembled ships. Guns were fired. Bugles sounded.

American Ambassador John Lothrop Motley said to the *Monarch*'s Captain John Commerell: Into your hands I deliver Mr. Peabody's remains. The *Monarch*, at Spithead Harbor, Portsmouth, awaited the end of the gale then blowing and the long voyage to George Peabody's homeland.

British honors brought dispute in America. One Union extremist said, "Peabody's remains on a British ship of war [is an] insult. Peabody was a secessionist." The charge, often made, was as often denied.

Peabody had told a Baltimore audience in 1866:

> My sympathies were with the Union. Three-fourths of my property was invested in United States Government and State securities. I saw no hope except in Union victory. But I could not turn my back on Southern friends.

The U.S. Congress argued about sending a naval reception for Peabody's remains. Grudgingly, both Houses approved. President Grant ordered Admiral Farragut to meet the *Monarch* in American waters.

The *Monarch*, accompanied by the U.S.S. *Plymouth*, went south to Madeira, west to Bermuda, and north to New England.

Bostonians expected to receive the *Monarch*. They were chagrined that little Portland, Maine, was chosen because of its deeper harbor. Union extremists in the Maine legislature attacked Peabody for his philanthropic generosity to southern "rebels."

At Portland, *Monarch* seamen carried the coffin ashore, January 29, 1870, a cold New England winter's day. Drums sounded a muted roll. The band played the somber *Death March*. Visitors filed by the coffin lying in state in Portland's City Hall.

On February 1, 1870, in Portland City Hall, *The Messiah* was sung, Mozart's *Requiem* was played. Plumed horses pulled the hearse through Portland streets to the railway station. The funeral train left Portland. Hours later it reached old South Danvers, renamed Peabody, Mass., in 1868.

Prince Arthur, Queen Victoria's son, attended the funeral, along with Massachusetts and Maine governors, Harvard President Charles W. Eliot, mayors of six nearby cities, and trustees of Peabody's institutes.

George Peabody's honors were on display in the Peabody Institute: Queen Victoria's miniature portrait made especially for him, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and resolution of praise for the Peabody Education Fund, honorary memberships in the Fishmongers and Clothworkers' Companies, and the Freedom of the City of London.

The eulogy was given by Robert Charles Winthrop, George Peabody's philanthropic advisor:

> What a career this has been whose final scene lies before us! The trusts he established, the institutes he founded, the buildings he raised stand before all eyes. He planned these for many years. When I expressed amazement at his purpose, he said to me, "Why Mr. Winthrop, this is no new idea for me. From the earliest of my manhood, I have contemplated some such disposition of my property; and <u>I have prayed my heavenly Father day by day, that I might be enabled, before I died, to show my gratitude for the blessings which He has bestowed upon me by doing some great good for my fellow-men.</u>"

Those last words are carved on Peabody's Westminster Abbey marker. On February 8, 1870, George Peabody was buried in Harmony Grove Cemetery, near where he played as a boy, where he built the family tomb. The unusual 96-day Anglo-American funeral was over. In their search for a hero, two nations gave George Peabody's funeral more than a touch of grandeur.

Why did he give? What was his motive? One clue is a motto sent with his check establishing his first institute in his hometown, 1852. That motto was: "Education, a debt due

from present to future generations." Another clue is his pride in having built an American banking firm in London, financial center of the world. He said publicly in 1856:

> Heaven has been pleased to reward my efforts with success, and has permitted me to establish a house in the great metropolis of England. I have endeavored to make it an American house, to give it an American atmosphere, to furnish it with American journals; to make it a center for American news, and an agreeable place for my friends visiting London.

Did he give to gain honors? We previously mentioned George Peabody honors in life. His honors after death included:

- Resolutions of praise from a dozen American cities and organizations.
- Temporary burial and an engraved marker, Westminster Abbey.
- Remains returned from England aboard a British warship.
- U.S. Naval reception of his remains.
- Prince Arthur, Queen Victoria's son, in attendance at his funeral.
- Election to New York University Hall of Fame.
- His likeness on a large bronze door in the U.S. Capitol Building.
- And, in 1995, Bicentennial programs on the 200th anniversary of his birth (1795-1995); in Nashville at Peabody College; at Danvers and Peabody, Mass., at the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, and at Westminster Abbey, England, where his grave marker has been refurbished.

Did he give because of his own lack of education? To a nephew who asked financial help to attend Yale College, Peabody wrote in 1831:

> Deprived as I was of the opportunity of obtaining anything more than the most common education, I am well qualified to estimate its value by the disadvantages I labor under in the society which my business and situation in life frequently throws me, and willingly would I now give twenty times the expense attending a good education could I now possess it, but it is now too late for me.

Did he give out of a disappointed love affair? He had a broken engagement. In old age, on a New York visit, when a friend congratulated him on being the greatest philanthropist of his time, Peabody said, "After my disappointment long ago, I determined to devote myself to my fellow-beings, and am carrying out that decision to my best ability."

The 'disappointment" George Peabody referred to may have been connected with Esther Elizabeth Hoppin, a Providence, R.I., beauty who, with other Americans flocked to London for the June 28, 1838, coronation of young Queen Victoria. Esther Hoppin had earlier met Alexander Lardner in Philadelphia. They were infatuated, but parted, she to finish school and attend the coronation. George Peabody met, fell in love, and became engaged to Esther Hoppin. Word of the pending marriage spread quickly to Peabody's friends in Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia.

Esther Hoppin returned to Providence, met Alexander Lardner again, realized that her engagement was a mistake, and explained it all in a letter to George Peabody. Esther Hoppin married Alexander Lardner. It was a happy marriage with two children. A portrait in Philadelphia of Esther Hoppin by artist Thomas Sully shows her in all her beauty.

Whether or not George Peabody would have become a philanthropist had he married and had a family is conjecture. Peabody's motives for giving also remain something of a mystery.

George Peabody deserves to be remembered. His institutions deserve continuing support.

Being on the trail of George Peabody was a grand adventure.